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ABSTRACT

A major contributor to the field of adult education, Dr. Ambrose Caliver devoted much of his professional life to adult literacy. While this area continued to occupy his interest and best efforts, he also took an active role in such matters as displaced persons, human rights, public affairs, aging, and professional development of adult educators. Born in 1894, Caliver began his career as a high school principal in Tennessee. Before his death in 1962 he served in the following capacities: faculty member at Fisk University; specialist in the education of Negroes, United States Office of Education; organizer of the National Advisory Committee on the Education on Negroes; implementer of a number of national surveys, including the National Survey of Teacher Education, the National Secondary Education Survey, the National Survey of the Vocational and Educational Guidance of Negroes, and the National Survey of the Higher Education of Negroes; director of a number of workshops dealing with the development of adult literacy programs as well as the professional development of adult educators; initiator of a series of dramatic educational radio broadcasts on Negroes' participation in American life; member of the Displaced Person's Commission; and president of the Adult Education Association. (MN)

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AMBROSE CALIVER

Adult Educator and Civil Servant

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THE ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
OF THE U.S.A.

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FOREWORD

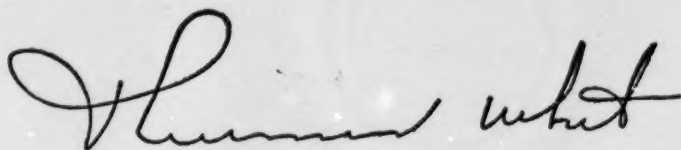
It is our hope that this will be the beginning of a series of pamphlets on great men and women who have made significant contributions to the field of adult education.

Dr. Ambrose Caliver was not only President of the Adult Education Association at the time of his death, but he demonstrated throughout his lifetime his interest in helping people through education. He devoted a large part of his professional life to adult literacy. This was the beginning of his entry into the adult education field and while this area continued to occupy his interest and best efforts, he also took an active role in such matters as displaced persons, human rights, public affairs, aging, and professional development of adult educators.

The authors of this pamphlet, Dr. Daniel and Dr. Holden, knew and worked with him for many years. Roger Pyle, a law student at Harvard University, did research on certain parts of this pamphlet and Mrs. Caliver supplied information and documentation. Mrs. Bernice Thayer prepared the copy for the printer and Les Bounds designed the pamphlet.

All books published by the Adult Education Association, U.S.A. are approved by the Publications Committee. The members of this committee are Herbert Auer, Theodore Gnagey, David Rauch, James Rietmulder, Milton Stern, William J. Trainor, Jr. (Chairman), and Coolie Verner.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all these people for their service in helping to make this publication possible.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Thurman White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Thurman White
President, Adult Education Association, U.S.A.

PREFACE—

When Ambrose Caliver died on January 29, 1962, the field of adult education lost one of its most dedicated and distinguished servants. Born in 1894, he received his A.B. degree in 1915 from Knoxville College, his M.A. in 1920 from the University of Wisconsin, and his Ph.D. in 1930 from Columbia University. The range and pattern of his professional work was impressive. When in 1930 he was appointed by the U. S. Office of Education as Senior Specialist in Higher Education for Negroes, he became the first Negro to be assigned to classified Federal service on the professional level.

By this time his interest in the education of adults had already begun to appear. Realist and humanitarian as he was, Ambrose Caliver felt compelled to combine his work for the Higher Education of Negroes with adult education for everyone. He was by all odds the most influential leader of adult literacy education in the U. S. A. and he was one of the most prominent in developing educational programs for the aging.

But to Ambrose Caliver, programs of literacy and education for the aging were not only worthy in their own right but, even more important, were a means for developing the domain of adult education as a whole. His election to the presidency of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. for the period 1961-62 was evidence of the extent to which these efforts had gained the respect of his colleagues.

Few persons have exhibited a more single-minded devotion to the field of adult education than Ambrose Caliver, and few have been more strategically situated for putting such devotion to work in the service of the profession. He died at the peak of his career and, until a few hours of his passing, was as active as ever. With a remarkable sense of the future, he was a splendid example of the fact that those who achieve leadership in the education of adults are committed to an adventure as unending as life itself.

Howard Y. McClusky
First President of the Adult Education
Association, U.S.A.



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On November 15, 1963, the National Commission for Adult Literacy of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. (founded and directed by Dr. Caliver from 1955 to 1962) presented Mrs. Caliver with a plaque engraved as follows:

TO HONOR DR. AMBROSE CALIVER

1894 TO 1962

Dr. Caliver's knowledge, wisdom, devotion to the lifetime task of elevating and dignifying the status of man; his capacity to labor and constant dedication to humanitarian goals; his wisdom, vision, perseverance, and statesmanship, have profoundly influenced the development and administration of adult education in community, state and national affairs.

The AEA

The Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. is a non-profit membership organization established in 1951 "to further the concept of education as a process continuing through life." It serves its members through a monthly magazine, *Adult Leadership*, and a quarterly journal, *Adult Education*, as well as through conferences, consultation, research studies, committee activities, public interpretation, and informational services. Membership is open to all persons interested in the education of adults.

The purposes of the Association are:

1. To further the concept of education as a process continuing throughout life—
2. To promote and develop adult education in the United States by affording opportunities to professional and non-professional adult educators to increase their competence, and by encouraging and assisting organizations and agencies concerned with adult education to develop adult education activities and to work together in the interests of adult education—
3. To receive and disseminate information about adult education—
4. To promote the balanced development of educational services for adult persons in the United States—
5. To cooperate with adult education agencies internationally—
6. To do any and all lawful things necessary, suitable, and proper for the promotion and development of adult education or for the accomplishment of any of the other purposes hereinabove set forth.

For further information, write the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.—1225 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C., 20036.

I

If Ambrose Caliver were alive today, he would rejoice in the progress that is being made in providing education for all—children and adults, the privileged and the underprivileged, the normal and the exceptional. His life was devoted to identifying problems, to planning projects for improving the educational welfare and opportunities of people—especially minority groups—and to establishing better understanding and cooperation among people of different racial or social origins.

Early Experiences and Education

His human concerns and sense of mission in life were evident at an early age. Born in Saltville, Virginia, in 1894, Ambrose Caliver was given the name that had been borne by his father and grandfather before him. While working in a coal mine at the age of eight, he demonstrated the sense of professional responsibility that distinguished his entire life. When he saw that a guard usually stationed at a rail intersection was not there, he took over the post and directed the coal carts to their destinations.

His formal education was obtained first in the public schools of Virginia and later in Knoxville, Tennessee, and finally at Knoxville College, a church-related institution, from which he graduated in 1915. A childhood friendship with Rosalie Rucker grew into adolescent courtship that led to marriage after he completed his college education. Their mutual respect, companionship, and love maturing through the years provided a strong motivating influence throughout his career.

After college he began his professional career as a high school principal in Tennessee and later as an assistant principal in Texas. His life grew richer through teaching, administering, and, ultimately, further formal study. He pursued further studies at the

University of Chicago, Tuskegee Institute, Harvard University, and at the University of Wisconsin, from which he received the Master of Arts degree in 1920.

At Fisk University

In 1917, Ambrose Caliver was appointed to the faculty at Fisk University to develop a program of training in manual arts. Earlier, while a teacher and assistant principal in El Paso, Texas, he had conducted classes in woodwork, and he believed that the education of a person was incomplete if he had failed to learn to work with his hands. One of his treasured papers explains his viewpoint on this subject. It is an analysis of the educational objectives of health, command of the fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, civic education, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character, and it incorporates illustrations of the specific ways in which manual arts help to attain these objectives. At the time he joined the Fisk faculty, most of its senior administrators and faculty were Caucasian but as Negroes received more formal education and professional experience, there were increased demands for their participation in policymaking and administration. This period of the 1920's was one of rapid change in Negro education and Caliver was prominent in those activities which promoted change. With characteristic vision, he planned many projects for expanding Fisk University and for improving educational opportunities for Negroes. Beginning as an instructor, he rose through the academic ranks and eventually assumed administrative responsibilities. He was Publicity Director in 1925, Dean of the Scholastic Department in 1926, and then finally Dean of the University in 1927. During one summer while on leave from Fisk University, he served as a personnel officer at the American Rolling Mill Company in Middletown, Ohio. He organized a summer session, produced a film on the institution, and administered institutional affairs in the absence of the President. In his spare time, he engaged in writing and research on such topics as student preparation for college, diagnostic and prognostic values of testing, education and manual arts, and on curriculum and guidance.

Toward Larger Service

While still at Fisk, Caliver resumed formal graduate study by attending summer sessions at Teachers College, Columbia University. In 1929 he obtained a leave of absence and spent the year at Columbia completing the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, concentrating on the administration of higher education. Following graduation from Columbia, he was appointed to the position of Specialist in the Education of Negroes in the United States Office of Education.

The official press release from the Department of the Interior announced this appointment:

A new position of considerable importance has recently been created in the United States Office of Education and a specialist in Negro education has been assigned to the office. Its specific and immediate function is to serve as a clearinghouse of information concerning Negro education; to conduct, direct, and encourage educational research; to stimulate interest in the present status and future possibilities of Negro education; and to assist in coordinating the various researches, activities, and interests of Negro schools and of persons concerned in Negro education and related matters.

In realizing these purposes the office will endeavor to collect facts of all kinds bearing directly and indirectly on Negro education; and make periodic digests of educational literature dealing with or which may be of use to Negro education. The specialist in this office will visit schools and communities throughout the country; make contacts with school officials and others who are interested in Negro education; attend and address meetings of educational and other organizations on topics relating to his specialty; and will act as consultant on Negro education with educators and others desiring his services. In performing his duties the specialist will endeavor to confer with and utilize the services of specially qualified persons in the various fields throughout the country; and will attempt to focus on the problems of Negro education all of the expert knowledge, techniques, and educational forces available in the Nation.

Because of its uniqueness and strategic situation it is felt that the position offers large opportunities for service both to the Negro race and to the Nation. Although the major emphasis will be on public elementary and secondary education, any question

or problem relating to Negro education in general will receive careful and interested attention. The new office is located in the U. S. Office of Education in the Department of the Interior¹.

This new position was in the Division of Special Problems of which Mrs. Katharine Cook was chief. Since the duties were stated only in general terms, Caliver realized that he had to make his own way as a Federal Government employee and develop the details of his position and the nature of the services to be rendered.

II

The First Few Years in the U. S. Office of Education

The U. S. Office of Education had not previously employed a Negro as a professional specialist. A visitor to this new office discovered that the staff ate lunch in the office because Negroes were not permitted to eat in the cafeteria except by special arrangement. In the Educational Directory issued at that time, the new staff member was listed as "Specialist in negro education," for the United States Government Printing Office was still using a lower-case "n" in spelling the word Negro. He helped pioneer desegregation of government cafeteria. Interior and Labor were the first Departments to open their facilities to all.

In writing about these early years, a colleague said:

In the beginning, Dr. Caliver and his small staff were objects of curiosity, sometimes tolerated, sometimes ignored, and rarely accepted. . . . From time to time help came from totally unexpected sources, and more often each tiny achievement required maximum effort. . . . A cultural pioneer must have courage, patience, perseverance, resilience, and vision. That Ambrose Caliver had these in adequate measure was evident, at least to those who worked with him, in his indomitable insistence upon achieving a goal or furthering a project that he felt to be important. An early example of this was the annual ordeal he endured in producing the half-hour American Education Week radio program during 1930-40. Broadcasting executives were not merely disinterested in a broadcast on Negro education, they

¹Department of the Interior memo for the Press, September 11, 1930.

were antagonistic, evasive, inaccessible. The first year's program included the Secretary of the Interior and a velvet-voiced contralto, so opposition crumbled. The story, with variation, was repeated year after year. A lesser man would have given up. But Dr. Caliver was constitutionally unable to surrender or to admit defeat.²

These conditions were challenges and opportunities for service and growth. Therefore, his staff had to be better and work harder than others. His perseverance, perception, analytical skill, tact and diplomacy, and the ability to persuade others to cooperate in significant undertakings were his great strengths. Dr. Caliver defined his own duties and gained financial, moral and professional support. Thus he was able to promote investigations, consultations, conferences, and publications which improved the welfare and education of Negroes that would lead to better understanding and rapport among differing racial groups.

In the first five years, the new specialist produced needed bibliographies on Negro education, prepared bulletins on selected phases covering the education of Negroes, and authored monographs on the Negro in connection with surveys on pressing national problems. The initial bulletin, *Bibliography on Education of the Negro*, published in 1931 listed items for the period from 1928 to 1930. Two years later appeared *Background Study of Negro College Students and Rural Elementary Education Among Negro Jeanes Supervisors*. During the same year he published two survey monographs, *Education of Negro Teachers in the United States* and *Secondary Education for Negroes*. In 1935 he issued two additional works, *Availability of Education to Negroes in Rural Communities* and *Fundamentals in the Education of Negroes*. This latter publication was an abstract of the proceedings of a significant conference held the preceding year on fundamental problems of the country's largest racial minority.

Ambrose Caliver set a high standard and a fast-moving pace for specialists in the Office of Education. In five years, his activities had encompassed the range of problems and formal school levels

²Theresa B. Wilkins, "Ambrose Caliver: Distinguished Civil Servant," *The Journal of Negro Education*, 31:212-14, Spring 1962.

incident to the education of Negroes including elementary, secondary, collegiate, teacher education, and rural education. In each of these areas he had secured the cooperation of the entire staff of his own governmental agency as well as that of other Federal agencies, State and local authorities, and countless white and non-white individuals, institutions and organizations throughout the country.

National Advisory Committee on the Education of Negroes

One of the early recommendations made by Dr. Caliver led to the formation of a National Advisory Committee on the Education of Negroes. The Commissioner of Education, William John Cooper, called the first meeting of the Committee during the session of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association in February 1931.

The press release from the Department of the Interior noted that this committee was "... to discuss the policies and function of the Office of Education, especially the new unit in the organization concerned with the education of Negroes, and to consider the general purposes of the National Secondary Education Survey and the National Survey of Teacher Education." The membership of this committee included leading educators from various sections of the country and representatives of the several Negro national educational organizations.

Dr. Caliver had begun his special investigation to ascertain the current status of secondary education among Negroes as a part of the nation-wide survey of secondary education directed by Commissioner Cooper and Professor Leonard V. Koos, the Associate Director. It was thought that a special investigation of Negro schools would aid in focusing more adequately on the minority problems in light of the more general aims of the comprehensive national survey. The advice of committee members was sought on the best methods of securing widespread public interest and of obtaining complete and accurate information from the high schools. Although there had been some earlier studies on the education of

Negroes, more attention had been given to colleges and universities. This particular study remains the only large-scale investigation of public secondary education among Negroes that has ever been attempted.

The National Conference on Fundamental Problems in the Education of Negroes

The National Conference on Fundamental Problems in the Education of Negroes met in Washington, D. C., May 9-12, 1934. It was called by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, the Honorable Harold L. Ickes. The conference was under the general chairmanship of the United States Commissioner of Education, Dr. George F. Zook, and the specific direction of the Senior Specialist in the Education of Negroes. There were 1,030 registered and 501 of these were out-of-town delegates.

Dr. Caliver had talked with scores of leaders concerning the conference and he had organized a special national advisory committee of outstanding educators to plan it. He personally induced the Secretary of the Interior to issue the conference invitations and to make the opening address. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a letter dated May 1, 1934, indicated his expectations for the meeting. This said, in part:

As yet all too small a percentage of the Negro children of our country, especially in its rural sections, enjoys adequate or equitable facilities for the education which is America's goal for every child. We have neither schools properly to accommodate the children who should be in attendance, nor educational offerings of the quality and variety adapted to their needs. How to meet these two fundamental requirements adequately, and the ramifications into which consideration of their varied aspects take us, are the problems to which this conference will devote its attention. May it result in rendering the significant service it aspires to render to our country and to the Negro race.

As a further result of Caliver's contact with the White House, the President permitted the use of the Seal of the United States on a conference document and Mrs. Roosevelt addressed the conference

on a national radio broadcast. The meeting closed with an address by the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Oscar Chapman.

The most important of the many results of the conference was the adoption of proposals on "Fundamentals in the Education of Negroes." This was a charter for further study and action programs for Negroes and an estimated 10,000 copies were distributed. These proposals were the culmination of months of planning and organization; the presentation of reports by national leaders in the fields of recreation, vocations, health, home life, citizenship, morale, and finance; and the many studies which Dr. Caliver had conducted in the United States Office of Education.

National Survey of the Vocational and Educational Guidance of Negroes

Another project at this time was a National Survey of the Vocational and Educational Guidance of Negroes. Dr. Caliver initiated, planned, and directed this timely research project, which employed 500 persons in 33 States and used \$250,000 in WPA funds. In conducting this project Dr. Caliver secured and maintained cooperation with many Federal, State, and local officials. With the exception of general supervision exercised over finances, statistical forms, and the like, he had a relatively free hand in carrying out this work. Since this project was quite different from any other projects being conducted in the office at the time, it required different methods and instruments of research, and different administrative procedures, all of which were developed by Dr. Caliver with the cooperation of his advisors and staff. The professional staff under his supervision included college, State and local officials.

The National Survey of the Higher Education of Negroes

In cooperation with the Office of Education's Division of Higher Education, Dr. Caliver undertook the National Survey of the Higher Education of Negroes during 1930-41. This survey was made at the

request of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes and the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land-Grant Colleges, with a special Congressional appropriation of \$40,000.

The project had a special significance. For a quarter of a century prior to this the United States Office of Education had conducted studies of higher education among Negroes. The results of the first of these were published as Bulletin 1916, Nos. 36 and 39, under the title *Negro Education, A Study of Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, directed by Thomas Jesse Jones, under a grant from the Phelps-Stokes Fund. The findings from the second appeared as Bulletin 1928, No. 7, *Survey of Negro Colleges and Universities*, with Arthur J. Klein, as director and author. The third survey was a part of the nation-wide study of land-grant colleges and universities. It was reported as *Negro Land-Grant Colleges and Universities* and appeared as a section of Bulletin 1930, No. 9.

Dr. Fred J. Kelly, then Chief of the Division of Higher Education, was Director of the study, and Dr. Caliver was Associate Director. When Dr. Kelly became ill, Dr. Caliver had to assume the responsibilities of the project. He was exceptionally well qualified for this position as he was familiar with the earlier surveys. His field of doctoral study was administration in higher education, and his experience included administrative positions as noted earlier, as well as research and higher education. Consequently he was particularly conscious of background factors relevant to the understanding of educational problems. The survey emphasis upon the inter-related socio-economic phenomena and their bearing upon the educational problems reflected some of Dr. Caliver's perception of problems and his insistence upon getting to causes and then devising remedies or solutions.

In accordance with his accustomed procedure, Dr. Caliver organized a special advisory committee for the National Survey of the Higher Education for Negroes. Most members had already served on the earlier advisory committee that was formed in 1931. It is significant that these educators recognized that separate and equal educational provisions were inadequate and that, quite apart from the survey, they addressed themselves to the special training pro-

grams that were to begin in the 1940's. Among other things they passed a resolution which noted:

We offer full cooperation with the expectation that the Negro will be completely integrated in the training program now being set up. We ask that this matter be brought forcefully to the attention of Federal, State and local authorities.³

III

Continuing Services to 1945

During the decade of the 1940's, Dr. Caliver accelerated his pace as a Federal servant and national educator. He received an increasing number of requests for information and advice and for his services as a speaker, a writer, a liaison resource person, and as a professional leader of investigations and conferences. He used every such opportunity to promote the causes of education, of democracy, and of better human relations. A colleague once remarked that Caliver was "the right man, at the right place, at the right time."

In the Office of Education, he served 78,000 Negro undergraduate, graduate, and professional students enrolled in institutions of higher learning; 70,000 teachers and administrators in schools and colleges for Negroes; hundreds of Federal, State, and local officers interested in education; scores of officers of professional and lay organizations who were associated with educational programs; and numerous representatives of foreign governments seeking information and aid for their own countries. Dr. Caliver's capacity for making friends, his ability to promote projects and to raise funds, and his inclination to conceive projects boldly and broadly were well suited to his new position as Specialist for the Higher Education of Negroes.

After fifteen years in the Federal Government, he wrote an article on "Services to Negroes—A Decade and a Half of Projects and Activities," which noted that special publications issued during the 15-year period included 19 bulletins, 10 leaflets, pamphlets, or

³Memo from the Advisory Committee for the National Survey of the Higher Education of Negroes, dated October 1941.

mimeographed circulars, and 36 articles. These were exclusive of the sections on Negroes appearing in the Department's biennial surveys and in other Office of Education bulletins. The report showed that approximately 100,000 copies of the 19 bulletins had been distributed in answer to requests.

Although Dr. Caliver had been assigned as a staff member of the Division of Higher Education, his activities continued to increase in diversity and influence. All of the investigations which he had made tended to show the contagious nature and attendant evils of illiteracy. Along with many other persons, he was struck with the high rate of illiteracy among draftees; and during the war he published statistics which indicated that of one million Negroes inducted into the Armed Services, one-half could not read or write at the fourth grade level—a sharp contrast to the half-million functional illiterates found among the nine million white inductees. In these facts he saw not only waste in the war effort but also the contribution that better-educated manpower could make to peacetime activities. Thus he wrote:

Raising the nation's illiterate adults to functional knowledge standards will help alleviate existent group tensions. It is definitely a first and a must in the development of better intergroup relations. It will enable groups such as the Negro to become better and healthier citizens and better workers.

Later he noted the slow pace of the efforts to eradicate illiteracy and wrote, with regard to the country as a whole:

At mid-twentieth century, there are still approximately ten million adult American citizens—more than a tenth of the adult population—who are functionally illiterate . . . Illiteracy is closely related to many other deficiencies, such as poverty, disease, malnutrition, low wages, and occupational insufficiency.⁴

His efforts in speaking, writing, and conferring about the problem of literacy led logically to his designation as director of the Project for Literacy Education by the Commissioner of Education in the Federal Security Agency in 1946. The Project was conducted

⁴Ambrose Caliver, "Needed: Another Crash Program," reprinted in *Adult Leadership*, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1958.

in several major stages in which the initial step was the assembling of educational, professional, and community leaders to discuss problems of Negro adult illiteracy. At that time it was estimated that the number of Negro illiterates exceeded three million persons and constituted one-third of the national total. Dr. Caliver launched upon a speaking and writing tour for the purpose of contacting the responsible national groups of organized Negro adults. Among the papers remaining in his files are titles like these: "What the National Council of Negro Women Can Do About Adult Illiteracy," and "What the Independent Protective Order of Elks Can Do About Adult Illiteracy."

In stressing the need for adult education of Negroes, Caliver made clear his belief that "the adult education of Negroes should not be different in objectives from that of other groups," but contended that:

There should be a difference in amount and application. Because of their circumstances, they probably need more and a greater variety than others. The ultimate purpose of adult education should be better to facilitate their adjustment to our democratic and technological life, and to assure their greatest possible contribution. Such a purpose will necessarily find expression through different methods, different materials, and different immediate objectives. In one community it may be an attack on illiteracy, in another the improvement of home and community conditions, in another, occupational adjustment, and in still another, civic enlightenment or recreational or artistic development. In many, of course, all of these approaches, and others, must be employed simultaneously.⁵

The second phase of the project was the preparation of suitable instructional materials and the training of competent teachers for adults whose literacy was below the fourth grade level. Hampton Institute made facilities available for the workshop that initiated the educational procedures.

One of the important workshops directed by Caliver was the Institute on Adult Education for Negroes sponsored by the U. S. Office of Education with the cooperation of the National Conference

⁵Ambrose Caliver, "Adult Education of Negroes." *School Life*, June 1939. (Reprint)

on Adult Education and the Negro and the American Association for Adult Education, at Hampton Institute, Virginia, from August 12 to September, 1946. The purposes were (1) to prepare personnel for the training and supervision of teachers of adults in the fundamental processes; (2) to demonstrate the effectiveness for civilian use of certain educational techniques developed by the Armed Forces; (3) to collect, consider, and evaluate resource materials for the teaching of adults; (4) to identify and to classify the major problems of Negroes that are amenable to adult education on the elementary level; and (5) to formulate a tentative curriculum and instructional guide on the elementary levels for teachers of Negro adults.

The general approach was that of a workshop, with lectures, discussions, demonstrations, field trips, group conferences, committee activities, individual research and presentations in the form of reports. Thirty-five persons attended. The leadership (totaling about 20) included as eminent consultants such persons as Irving Lorge (Teachers College, Columbia University) and Paul A. Witty (Northwestern University).

Following the summer institute at Hampton adult programs were developed at Atlanta University, Fisk University, Fort Valley State College, Tennessee A and I College and Virginia State College. There was additional cooperation from Howard University, Miner Teacher College, and the Adult Education Department of the Baltimore, Maryland, Public Schools. In the first year, 1946-47, an estimated 200 persons received preparation as teachers and leaders of adults and the experimental instructional materials were used in the teaching of approximately 500 adults.

During World War II, the United States Army had established an intensive eighteen-week "Private Pete" program which succeeded in bringing 86 per cent of its trainees up to the fourth grade level. Caliver was aware of differences in soldier and civilian motivation. The civilian had to feel a need and to think that reading provides experiences appropriate to adult life. "Learning can be made popular if people are made to know that learning can help them get the things they want," he said.

The first drafts of a series of basic readers were prepared at

Hampton Institute. The materials were revised during succeeding years of experimental use and evaluation. "A Day With The Brown Family" was the first reader which offered selections about everyday experiences of adults in interpersonal relationships of home and family life. The ideas were continued in the second volume on "Making A Good Living" which stressed working, saving, spending, and utilizing leisure. "The Browns At School" was the third reader which related the everyday experiences of adults in educating and guiding their children, and in educating themselves. The fourth and final number in the sequence bore the title, "The Browns and The Neighbors," with reading matter pertinent to adult intergroup participation in religious, social, and civil life of the community. All books were issued in paperback.

There was also an eight-page test form entitled "Reading Placement" which was intended to be used in determining the reading level of adults in literacy training classes. There were teachers' manuals, lesson plans, and pupil workbooks. Additional materials were developed in mathematics.

Ambrose Caliver's files are full of memoranda for meetings, outlines for projects, and questions for evaluation related to literacy. For example, there is a duplicated sheet entitled "Suggested Criteria for the Development of Materials for Adult Literacy Classes." This has ideas pertinent to the current demand for simple reading materials—

The development of simple reading material for adult literacy classes depends upon the following criteria:

1. It tells a story.
2. It is written simply and directly.
3. It has adult concepts.
4. Principles underlying adult learning are recognized.
5. It is close to the experience of the group.
6. The themes involve practical problems and problem solving.
7. The characters live. They are *real* characters.
8. The events *could* happen.
9. Learners can identify himself with episodes used.
10. The sequence is logical.
11. The material helps the student to understand himself and

- his environment better and to make better adjustments to life.
12. The expression is natural and in terms of the group portrayed.
 13. Short, simple, direct sentences are used.
 14. Prepositional phrases, run-on sentences, and long sentences are avoided.
 15. Relatively few words are used per episode.
 16. Each important new word is used at least four times.
 17. Provision is made for getting meaning through context.
 18. A few major points are made clearly and emphatically. Other points are subordinate. The salient points are repeated many times.
 19. The words used conform to the vocabulary levels used in "Meet Private Pete," the Dale word list, or the WPA word list.
 20. Pictures illustrate clearly and precisely the meaning of the text. There should be a one to one correspondence between the pictures and the story.
 21. Problems presented should have universal appeal but should be expressed in terms of local situations.
 22. Emphasis is placed on concepts rather than on vocabulary.

Freedom's People

Convinced that mass media could be used effectively to promote national unity and race relations, Caliver initiated a series of dramatic educational radio broadcasts on Negroes' participation in American life. He secured the sponsorship both of the United States Office of Education and of a national committee of Negro and white leaders and he obtained financial assistance from both the Julius Rosenwald Fund and the Southern Education Foundation. The programs were broadcast monthly from September 1941 through April 1942 by the National Broadcasting Company under the title "Freedom's People."

The general purpose of the series was to show how Negroes have participated in and contributed to American life and culture; to give Negroes a "sense of belonging"; to inspire and encourage them to make more progress; and to give the majority group greater knowledge and a keener appreciation of the Negro's contributions to and potentialities for individual, group and national development. Each program was introduced by the statement:

From the Old World they came—high with hopes and strong!
To America they brought this hope and strength and founded a
nation of splendid freedoms! But this is not their story. No! This
is the story of those who did not come, but were taken! The story
of those who lost freedom when they came upon our shores and
for years they tilled our soil, gathered our crops, and made the
land good. Some won liberty—others waited. Then Freedom came
to all—a liberty well deserved, a liberty triumphant! Yes, this
is the story of the American Negro—13 million citizens of the
United States. And now the National Broadcasting Company in
cooperation with the United States Office of Education in the
Federal Security Agency brings you this program dedicated to
—and conceived by the American Negro—truly Freedom's
People!

The various aspects of Negro culture treated by individual programs included music, science and discovery, sports, military service, the Negro worker, the education of the Negro, creative art, and the Negro and Christian democracy. Appearing at different times were such individuals as Phillip Randolph, George Washington Carver, Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Nedom Roberts, Col. West Hamilton, W. C. Handy, Joshua White, Noble Sissle, Todd Duncan, Paul Roberson, Dorothy Maynor, Carol Brice, Count Basie, Cab Calloway, the Golden Gate Quartet, the Southernaires, the Tuskegee Choir, and the Howard University Women's Glee Club. The method and pattern were novel with each scene introduced by lines from an appropriate song.

These programs were the first radio series that had been devoted to Negroes. A transcription of the initial program was played at the White House and was commended by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt on two different occasions commented favorably on the series in her column, "My Day."

Commissioner J. W. Studebaker indicated the way in which the Office of Education had planned that these broadcasts should be used for the education of children, youth and adults in a letter sent to interested people in the country:

I am enclosing an announcement of a group of dramatized radio programs on the participation of Negroes in American life. . . .

The purpose of the broadcasts is to help develop national unity and better racial relations—greatly needed during these days of national crisis. I am writing to solicit your assistance in securing the greatest possible results from our efforts. . . .

Will you use as many as possible of the above or other ways to promote wide interest in these broadcasts and the transcriptions, and influence others to do likewise? If you have any suggestions or comments concerning the programs, I hope you will send them to Dr. Ambrose Caliver, Senior Specialist in the Education of Negroes, U. S. Office of Education, under whose general direction the programs are being produced. . . .

Recognition and Promotion

The year 1950 was a milestone in the life of Ambrose Caliver for by that time he had been in the United States Office of Education for 20 years. Appointed originally as the Specialist for Negro Education, his interests and assignments had been extended beyond working exclusively with Negro affairs. His research, consultative services and conferences had demonstrated the national and international character of problems previously thought to be restricted only to one particular ethnic group, and they had proved his own competence in dealing with these problems.

His superior officers recognized his talents and contributions. The Director of the Division of Higher Education, John Dale Russell, and the Commissioner of Education, Earl J. McGrath, agreed that Dr. Caliver should be in a position to render even greater service. He was, therefore, appointed to the position of Assistant to the Commissioner "to plan and to make studies of office-wide educational problems that cut across different divisions; to review programs and plans of the whole office for the purpose of giving assistance to the heads of divisions and their staffs in implementing the principles of democracy; to represent the Commissioner as requested in the investigation of new and underdeveloped educational proposals originating within and outside the office."

Dr. Caliver accepted the challenge of this new position whereby his campaign for broader educational opportunities and for increased public awareness of educational needs took on new dimensions. As

a result of experiences both during and after World War II, he launched a campaign, during the Korean War, to publicize the great waste of manpower and resources resulting from the continuing failure to help illiterates overcome their economic and social distress. "Because of the extent and complexity of our manpower needs," he wrote, "widespread illiteracy is intolerable. The machines required in both war and peace demand the kinds of skills, understanding, and flexibility not usually found among illiterates. The contacts and relationships of military personnel, of industrial personnel, and indeed of our entire population are of such nature that the possession of the communication skills has increasingly become necessary."

The 20-Year Testimonial Banquet

Professional associates paid tribute to those 20 years of service by sponsoring a banquet at Howard University honoring Ambrose Caliver. They chose the week in which the Conference of Negro Land-Grant College Presidents held its annual meeting in Washington. When the National Advisory Committee was formed in 1930-31, the presidents of the land-grant colleges for Negroes were well represented and had continued to give support and advice both officially and unofficially. Inasmuch as the Office of Education administered the funds that provided for some of their support and gave them their special status, his liaison role was of major importance.

Important national education associations such as the American Teachers Association, the National Association of Collegiate Deans and Registrars in Negro Schools, the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes sent representatives to the testimonial. Attending were the Administrator of the Federal Security Agency, Oscar R. Ewing; the Special Consultant to the U. S. Commissioner of Education, Buell G. Gallagher; and the Chief of the Division of Special Problems, Office of Education, Mrs. Katherine Cook. The sponsoring committee consisted of outstanding college administrators and the chairman was Howard H. Long, Dean, College of Education and Industrial Arts, Wilberforce University.

IV

National and International Service

In 1949, Dr. Caliver made a study for the Displaced Persons Commission. This Commission was concerned with those Europeans who were eligible for admission to the United States under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. During the same year, he was loaned to the Trusteeship Council.

Late in 1950, Dr. Caliver was appointed a member of the Survey Staff from the Office of Education that was formed to study the educational system of the Virgin Islands. The following year, he was made a member of a committee to explore recommendations for Federal participation in the development of community college education. In that same year, he was sent to Mexico City as a member of the United States Delegation to the Inter-American Cultural Council. The United States Supreme Court requested him to supply information and interpretations for its deliberations on *Brown vs. The District of Columbia* and associated cases which helped to advance the cause to which he devoted his life. The information he gave, growing out of long years as an education specialist and researcher, helped lay the groundwork for reversing the "separate but equal" doctrine (*Plessy vs. Ferguson 1896*) by presenting evidence that a separate education for Negroes was inherently unequal. The Court's subsequent ruling represented a triumph for his cause. Thus Dr. Caliver was able to contribute significantly to one of the most important advances in Negro education at mid-century through the Supreme Court's Decision of 1954 holding segregated schools to be unconstitutional.

Looking always to the future with optimism, he gave an enthusiastic comment to the press at Charlotte, North Carolina:

I am pleased, as an American citizen, that our Nation has taken another important step toward the realization of full democracy, which is the greatest promise of America. It is gratifying to witness the sane and constructive attitude which the South in general has taken in this matter. With the continuance of such a progressive approach on the part of the majority group, coupled

with the restrained, temperate, intelligent acceptance of this historic decision on the part of the minority, I am convinced that no problem will arise in implementing the decision which cannot be amicably and justly resolved. As the Court has removed the highest governmental sanction from the principles of second class citizenship, we can all breathe more freely, as we begin to operate in this new frame of references.⁶

This 1954 decision of the Supreme Court stimulated Dr. Caliver to renewed action to lead a nation-wide campaign against adult illiteracy. "It was felt," he wrote on one occasion, "that the time had arrived when it was necessary to give visibility to the program, and that the most feasible way of doing that was through a national commission of high-level citizens. The fact that there were many individuals, groups, and institutions attempting to do something about literacy education indicated the need of an independent agency, without any vested interest in a particular set of materials, which could attack the problem in an objective manner."

Growing Commitment to Adult Education

Dr. Caliver's involvement with adult education increased steadily. In 1954, he became chairman of the Section on Literacy and Fundamental Education of the Adult Education Association and he continued in this position until 1956. In 1955, his title of Assistant to the Commissioner was augmented by adding that of Chief, Adult Education Section, Office of Education. He contributed to a higher level of education by planning, organizing, and building up the adult education section. He made good use of every opportunity to relate adult education to the larger picture of education. In the same year, he became consultant to the National Commission on Literacy Education of the Adult Education Association of the United States which his aggressive leadership and initiative had been instrumental in forming. He enlisted the membership and support of outstanding citizens representing labor, business, agriculture, public schools, universities, the mass media, religion, women's groups, racial and inter-racial organizations, and civil rights groups. He successfully solicited

⁶Charlotte, North Carolina *News Observer*, May 18, 1954.

funds for the Commission from organizations, philanthropic foundations, and government. With the help of friends and officials of the District of Columbia public school system, and of community agencies, he opened an office for the Literacy Commission in Washington, D. C.

The objectives of the Commission were:

- 1) To alert the American public, particularly its opinion-forming leaders, to the magnitude and importance of the problem and the need for constructive action;
- 2) To collect and study facts about adult illiteracy and about programs now working to correct it;
- 3) To stimulate fact-finding, research, and pilot programs;
- 4) To build public opinion so that all communities would include literacy education in their regular educational programs; and
- 5) To stimulate more action — perhaps new types of action against illiteracy.

When this new Commission was brought to the attention of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, she wrote in "My Day" on June 16, 1958:

There has just come to my attention an important organization called the National Commission for Adult Literacy, a non-governmental group established by the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. and with headquarters in Washington, D. C. This Commission, working in cooperation with the Office of Education, is trying to meet a situation which under modern conditions of life is a great threat to our democratic form of government and our ability to function well as leader of the non-Communist world.

This is not a problem for particular States only, for the count reveals that practically every state in the union has large numbers of illiterates. A higher proportion of them are over 45, but every year about 50,000 functional illiterates reach the age of 14. It is true that illiteracy is slowly decreasing in the country, but we cannot afford to get rid of this block slowly since the demands made on adults increasingly require that they be literate.

It is for these reasons that the National Commission for Adult Literacy has been established. Its purposes are to inform the public of the problems created by illiteracy and to point out the need for constructive action.

To prevent duplication, the Commission will collect and study

facts and coordinate the knowledge about all programs now working on this problem. It will try to obtain cooperation in all communities so that the communities will improve adult education in their regular educational program. If it succeeds in its objectives and we can do the kind of quick educational job for adults in this country we must do to meet our need for educated citizens, then the Commission can leave the work in the hands of the Office of Education to prevent such a situation from arising again and to keep every part of the country stimulated to prevent illiteracy in its own community.

Until the present objectives are reached, the Commission must raise its budget from private contributions, assemble a staff of able people and do a publicity job which will take much concentrated effort. I believe this work is of concern to every thinking American citizen, and I hope that the Commission's headquarters at 2700 Ontario Road, N. W., Washington, D. C., will be a very busy place where many people come to offer their help and to get the necessary information.⁷

Dr. Caliver worked continuously to generate interest in the Commission for several years. However, it was not until after his death that the cause to which he had given himself received extensive national attention and national support. In 1964, the President's Poverty Program included an appropriation for Literacy Education.

The Great Debate and The American Forum

The Literacy Commission was not Dr. Caliver's only endeavor to promote basic education and understanding in his later years. He and his associates established and promoted discussion groups on the Nixon-Kennedy debates. They prepared a study guide for the discussions and prepared a leaflet—*The Great Debate*—which described the project and listed its specific objectives, which were:

- 1) To encourage citizens throughout the land to consider the problems and issues of our times.
- 2) To encourage citizens to discuss the problems and issues as they are presented by the candidates.

⁷Syndicated column in *The Washington Post*.

3) To relate conclusions of the discussions beyond personal concern to the welfare of the community, nation, and the world.

4) To develop in citizens that sense of personal commitment to *good and responsible* government which will motivate them to choose and vote wisely.

An Associated Press dispatch of November 4, 1960, perhaps best tells the story of his unflagging efforts: "To most people the proposed television debates between Senator Kennedy and Vice President Nixon represent just another way the two men campaign for the Presidency. But to Dr. Ambrose Caliver they represent the greatest opportunity this country has ever had for a mass approach to adult civic education."

Typically, from such a specific project, Dr. Caliver developed a general idea and subsequently proposed the "American Forum Program" designed to facilitate group discussion of national issues in American communities. This program was presented weekly as a debate and discussion of current issues and problems in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the nation. The first program televised was on our international policy—a debate between Barry Goldwater and Hubert Humphrey.

President of the Adult Education Association

In 1961 Dr. Caliver was elected President of the Adult Education Association, U.S.A. He had already described his feeling about that organization when he wrote:

I belong to the AEA because I believe (1) that it is the best source of the kind of knowledge, inspiration, and contacts needed for my professional growth; (2) it is the most effective means through which to develop the common purposes, the cooperation, and the coordination required among the many diverse adult education agencies; and (3) it offers an excellent rallying point and vehicle for those who are interested in developing a profession of adult education which has the goals, the unity, and the commensurate resources.⁸

⁸Ambrose Caliver, "Why I Belong To The Adult Education Association," *Adult Leadership*, Vol. 6, No. 10, April 1958.

Dr. Caliver's efforts on behalf of adult education marked the culmination of a career of varied accomplishment. His work received recognition from many sources. Tuskegee Institute, Virginia State College, Knoxville College, and Morgan State College, all awarded him honorary degrees, and several foundations gave support to his outstanding efforts. In 1955, he received a superior service award from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare "For outstanding service to American education through skilled and significant research and consultation on the education of minority groups."

Dr. Caliver must be remembered for what he was and what he represented. He was perpetually optimistic, diligent, and assiduous in his workmanship. Dr. Rufus Clement, President of Atlanta University and an associate member of the Conference of Negro Land-Grant Colleges, said of him in 1951, "I want to testify . . . to the man's loyalty, not only to his friends, but to his work. I have seen him in the field and have tried to intrigue him into a party or bull session . . . and he has steadfastly refused to do that until he has finished all of his assignments and until his work was well done. . . ."

He possessed the ability to make friends widely, to promote his projects among diverse groups, and to muster support. Some outstanding citizens who supported him over a period of years were Murray Lincoln, then President of Nationwide Insurance Company, Dr. Herold C. Hunt, Eliot Professor of Education at Harvard University, Philip Klein, then President of Harcum College, and Henry V. Putzel, retired. In his lifetime, he collected over a half-million dollars in contributions to support his various projects, and he carried his work far beyond the formal demands of his vocation. In addition to his professional commitments, he devoted time to numerous educational organizations as well as serving as a Deacon in the Congregational Church, working toward neighborhood organization to prevent urban blight, and being active in the Urban League of Washington.

Dr. Caliver detested rancor and acrimony between opposing groups and constantly sought consensus. As one in a position which a Negro had never held before, he believed that diverse groups could work out an amicable and harmonious accommodation without bitter controversy. At the time of Dr. Caliver's death, he had five big projects in his briefcase including a space train similar to

the freedom train in order to help educate the public about space and its future implications which was being worked out with Lee Howard, the Adult Education Association, and the Ford Museum of Greenfield Village; a publisher's contract for the translation into Spanish of the Brown Family Series in order to help solve the literacy problem in South America; a public affairs forum through television, using discussion guides, and the training of group discussion leaders; a collection of basic materials for a new book on the history of the American Negro; and an extensive program for the Adult Education Association and the National Literacy Commission that would identify the need for literacy education and attract sufficient resources to help eradicate ignorance and poverty.

On January 10, 1962, Dr. Caliver spoke to the Second United States Army General Educational Development Workshop. This was probably his last speech before his death that month. In it, he discussed the characteristics of leadership. Dr. Caliver was a man who put into practice what he suggested for others. The following excerpts express his philosophy, his convictions and his practice.

Flexibility to me means the ability to change. Unless we have the ability to change in a changing society and changing situations, we are lost—not only as leaders but as followers. . . . Secondly, considering flexibility . . . we must have a positive attitude toward change. . . . Thirdly, we must have open-mindedness. . . . we must be positive in our attitude instead of negative. . . . Another quality related to flexibility which we must have is a tentative mood . . . And finally, we must have no vested interest. There is only one vested interest which a leader should have . . . that is the interest of promoting intelligent and orderly change in people and in situations.

If you have these six sub-items which I mentioned, I think we will have this quality, this characteristic of flexibility that is so essential to effective leadership, not only in Adult Education but I think in any education, any situation. . . .

The second characteristic which is essential is imagination . . . an effective leader must have a good dose of imagination. What are some of the ingredients which go into imagination? What indicates you have imagination? First, a person must have the ability to dream. . . . There are good dreams and bad dreams. But

the ability to contemplate, reflect and think about what might be and what ought to be. . . . Secondly, the ability to see relationships is a part of imagination. . . . The third ingredient of imagination is creativity. Creative ability to make something that one has and make something different from it. . . . The fourth ingredient of imagination is vision—vision, perspective and perceptiveness. It is a three-dimension thing. It gives you breadth, . . . depth, . . . height. . . .

The third characteristic or quality is curiosity. . . . We must have the desire to know, we must have the ability to ask questions, and we must have the willingness to seek the answers to the questions. . . .

Commitment is the fourth quality and characteristic. Dedication, commitment, dedication. . . . We must have faith if we are to have a commitment. We must have, secondly, zeal and zest. . . . These are the characteristics that are absolutely essential to effective leadership. . . . but I'm quite convinced that unless we have this commitment to the cause, whatever the cause is, without these ingredients and many more that I haven't mentioned we can't be effective leaders. . . .

There must be sensitivity . . . the characteristic of sensitivity, the quality of sensitivity. . . . First of all it means being human. It means love of and belief in people. It means being people oriented rather than material, process, and organization oriented. . . . an understanding of the worth and dignity of every human being. If we are people oriented we will recognize, respect the worth and dignity of every human being whatever his status may be. The last one we must have practical idealism. . . . You must have both . . . you must, while you have your head in the clouds, keep your feet on the ground.

So, I would like to submit these six characteristics, qualities built on these obvious everyday things we know we must have . . . practicality, idealism, sensitivity and commitment, curiosity, imagination, and flexibility.

The January 1962 issue of *Adult Leadership* carried Dr. Caliver's message and plans as President of the Adult Education Association. The February 1962 issue gave notice of his death and carried the brief and descriptive statement by its editor, Nicholas P. Mitchell.

His death occurred just as his great plans for the expansion and development of the Association and its services were beginning to move forward. There can be no more fitting tribute than for all the members to exert renewed efforts to bring about the accomplishment of his program.

Those of us who are privileged to work with him closely in Association affairs feel a deep sense of personal loss. We shall miss his philosophical guidance, his patience, his kindly humor, and the friendly admonition with which he often closed telephone conversations, "Take care!"⁹

Dr. Caliver's strategy was to plan, to think, to write, and to propose ideas to influential groups. He was willing to test his ideas, to revise them, and to solicit help. He would rewrite, submit, entice, and cajole in order to get support. His own sincerity and dedication made others want to help him and he had the enviable ability to get many people working on different facets of the same problem which he would then coordinate. He never gave up, never appeared to be discouraged, and he never admitted defeat.

In March 1962, the Executive Committee of the Adult Education Association, U.S.A., passed the following motion with deep feeling:

We, the members of the Executive Committee, are deeply saddened by the untimely death of our President, Ambrose Caliver. We recognize and appreciate his dedication to the Adult Education Association, U.S.A. and the invaluable leadership which he provided. He gave generously of his time and effort without thought of self. The Executive Committee would at this time express its heartfelt thankfulness for all that Ambrose Caliver did to strengthen the Adult Education Association and to forward education for adults throughout our country.

⁹*Adult Leadership*, Vol. 10, No. 8, February 1962. Inside cover.